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THE NINTH MEḤABBERETH OF EMANUELE  
DA ROMA AND THE TRESOR OF PEIRE DE  
CORBIAC.

THE encyclopædic literature which flourished in the Middle Ages among the Provençals and Italians, was bound to attract the attention of the Italian Jews, and to find among them imitators.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, *Mosè da Rieti*, renowned as a Jewish physician and also as the author of an imitation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, forsook the language of his ancestors, and was the first among the Jews to write an entire work in Italian, taking inspiration from the *Tesoro* of Brunetto Latini.<sup>1</sup> A century earlier *Emanuele da Roma*, another imitator of the great Florentine poet, so greatly admired one of these *Tesori* that he composed a work in the same style in Hebrew verse.<sup>2</sup>

Brunetto Latini and the other authors of encyclopædias could not, by their poor and unpolished work, hope to inspire imitators to attain any great excellence. But whatever the imitations may be worth, it is not for that reason less noteworthy that some examples must have been found among the Jews. On the contrary, anyone who studies these works thoroughly, will find in them, firstly, a new

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Steinschneider, *Catal. Lugd. Batav. Cod. Scalig.*, 10. I am preparing a short exposition of this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Not to speak of all the encyclopædic compilations of Arabic origin (compare Steinschneider, *Die hebr. Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, Chapter I.), and of the famous book of Sidrach, whose Hebrew origin is now completely refuted (compare Steinschneider in *Buonarroti of Rome*, 1872, p. 235), it is known that there exists a Hebrew version of the Treatise, *Image du Monde*, by Gautier de Metz, although very probably not reproduced in the original poetic text. (Compare the edition of Amsterdam, 1733, and of Warsaw, 1873, and the articles of Neubauer concerning the translator, in the *Romania*, V., p. 129, and the *Histoire Litteraire de la France*, xxvii. 502).

proof of the ease with which the Jewish race acquires foreign culture; while, further, a strict examination of their derivation may help us to a better knowledge of the learning and intellectual activity of Mosè da Rieti and Emanuele da Roma, two interesting representatives of Italian Judaism.

A study of Emanuele's poem appeared to me, for the above reasons, to be not without interest with especial reference to his peculiar characteristics, and to the ease with which he derives inspiration for his works from those of others. Imitation is peculiar to ancient people, and Emanuele belonged to a race whose youth dates back to the most remote ages. But no one ever imitated so closely the works of others, as did Emanuele.

In studying his works, therefore, not only his poetical, but also his exegetical compositions, it is necessary to remember that we are not concerned with Emanuele alone, but with the many authors, whom he consciously imitated.

But Emanuele has different methods of borrowing his material. Sometimes he takes the central idea from his model, and in treatment he gives it an altogether original impress; at other times he is guilty of a direct and flagrant plagiarism. Thus, for instance, a glaring and impudent plagiarism occurs in his commentary to the "Song of Songs," where Emanuele copies directly *Mosheh Ibn Tibbon*, whom he declares to be his model, and likewise he copies *Ibn Ezra*, whose name he does not even mention.<sup>1</sup> Another imitation, which closely follows the original, is that of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which appears in his last *Mehabereth*.

Elsewhere Emanuele is able completely to free himself from the fetters of his imitating genius and taking from his models, as I have already said, the central idea, develops it

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<sup>1</sup> In this connection compare Salfeld, *Das Hohelied Salomo's bei den jüdischen Erklärern* (Berlin, 1879, p. 89), where, in the front rank, have been placed some short essays by these three commentators.

quite independently, modifies it and imparts to it his own characteristics, so as to render its origin scarcely perceptible. In this manner Emanuele wrote the first part of the Ninth Mehabbereth, in which he sings of the months of the year, drawing his inspiration from a poem by Ḥarizi,<sup>1</sup> and the second part of the same Mehabbereth, which is composed on the model of a Christian poem.

This is the imitation to which I referred in the opening lines of my article, and it consists of a poem of sixty stanzas, each of which contains four rhyming verses.<sup>2</sup>

Let us make, as far as possible, an analysis of this poem, and then try to discover the sources from which it is derived.

The poet describes himself plunged in sleep, when terrifying thoughts of death rise in his slumbering mind. It is not the pain of dying which he dreads, nor the passing into the Unknown World. He is filled with anguish by the thought that his wisdom will not avail him on the day of his death; he is convinced that all will be forgotten "in his tomb and in his rest." Then suddenly his consciousness reasserts itself with fresh vigour, and, instead of lamenting the day of his death, he begins to praise his own virtues, and to rejoice in them. "But I live! I live!" exclaims the poet. "I am wise; I am a prophet; I am strong as a lion, swift as a stag and a roebuck."

Intoxicated with a sense of his own greatness, he wishes to transmit his great name to the latest posterity, and he sings, or rather, dilates upon his gifts and his scientific erudition.<sup>3</sup> His physical and moral qualities, theology and

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<sup>1</sup> Compare *Tachkemoni von Jehudah al-Charisi*, published by M. Stern, Wien, 1854, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Makamen des Immanuel* (Lemberg, 1870), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> The line, "I slept, but my heart was awake," with which the poet begins his poem, is taken from the *Song of Songs* (chap. v. verse 2), and has served for the commencement of a poem by Abraham Ibn Ezra, (comp. A. Geiger—*Jüdische Dichtungen der spanischen und italienischen Schule*, Leipzig, 1856, p. 18 of the Hebrew text), and also of two less celebrated poems by other authors (comp. Zunz, *Literaturgesch. der Synag. Poesie*,

ascetism, history and geography, natural philosophy and astronomy, medicine and magic, arts and crafts, language and literature—these are the subjects of Emanuele's poems. But it must not be thought that the poet describes in detail each branch of his learning or each of his talents, or that he states the usefulness and beauty of all the countries which he mentions. He does not attain to this, since the whole poem is merely a catalogue of the lands and kingdoms which he has visited, of the virtues and vices which he possesses, and of the arts and crafts which he knows.

At the commencement of his poem, Emanuele says: "I am wise, I am a prophet . . . ; I am a weaver and an embroiderer; I am a builder and an excavator; I am a weigher and an author; I am a potter and a traveller; I am a prince and a commander, a deceiver, and a cheat . . ." He then enumerates a goodly number of trades,<sup>1</sup> mentioning incidentally some of his virtues and vices; then he passes to his scientific knowledge, which is infinite in its scope; then he enumerates once more his moral qualities, introducing again the names of sciences, arts, and crafts, and concludes with a catalogue of languages and countries. He knows Hebrew, Egyptian, and Arabic; Greek and Idumean; Chaldaic and Aramaic; the language of Media and Assyria, of Persia, and many others. He was born in Rome, but visited Egypt and mighty Ethiopia; he was at Thebes and on Mount Tabor, in Spain and in Palestine.

The poet ends this curious catalogue of the most diverse subjects by signing his name according to the numerical value of the letters which compose it:—"My name is seventy and forty (מ and נ), and a nun joined to a vav (ו-נ), and the ending of my name is El (אל)."

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pp. 569 and 588, where the poems of a certain Joseph and Perez Jehil b. Natanel are quoted). As regards the lamentations of Emanuele concerning his death, the idea is common to many of the other poets, and Emanuele himself returns to it many times, especially in the 26th Mecama.

<sup>1</sup> Emanuele makes such an enumeration of trades also in the 27th Mecama (*Topheth va-Eden*), p. 224.

With such a poem the writer "encircled himself as with a crown,"<sup>1</sup> and "set his eyes upon it";<sup>2</sup> but we, who are more prosaic than Emanuele, are forced to agree that though the crown was woven with many flowers, these are faded and withered, having no bright colour nor any sweet perfume. But now it is time to seek the origin of the poem.

He who pays attention to the style adopted by Emanuele in this poem, a style, moreover, of which this is not the only example in his works; he who remembers the easy contrasts, and his curious habit of laying claim to the most diverse moral qualities, to the finest virtues, and to the lowest vices; he who takes all this into account, I say, recalls of necessity the Sicilian poet, Ruggiero Pugliese.

At any rate this was effect which the Emanuele's poem produced on me, inasmuch as, while I perused laboriously that long string of abstract subjects, which follow in endless sequence, I recollected the equally meaningless and strange lines of the Sicilian poet:—

"I am humble and proud; valiant, cowardly and courageous; bold, daring and timorous; I am foolish and wise—sad, gay, and joyous;—generous, avaricious, and suspicious;—courteous, boorish, and jealous; . . . I am poor, rich and indigent; I am healthy and ill; young and old, oppressed, and very often calm." . . .

These are the lines of Ruggiero Pugliese,<sup>3</sup> but it is evident that the style is the same as that of Emanuele's Hebrew verses.

Ruggiero Pugliese lays claim to the same qualities as

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuele takes this expression from Job xxxi. 36.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is also found in the Bible, Jeremiah xl. 4; and Genesis xliv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> "Umile sono, ed orgoglioso :—prode, e vile e coraggioso :—franco e sicuro e pauroso; e sono folle e saggio,—e dolente e allegro e gioioso :—largo, e scarso e dubitoso :—cortese, e villano e invidioso—. . . . Povero e ricco e disasciato—sono, e fermo e malato :—giovane e veechio, ed aggravato—e sano spessamente. . . ." Compare this poem in the collection of D'Ancona and Comparetti: "Le antiche rime volgari secondo la lezione del Cod. Vat. 3793, Vol. I., No. 60."

Emanuele, and introduces into his poem the same foolish contradictions and identic artificial contrasts.

The two poets only differ in this fact, that while Emanuele writes in this strain only now and then, Ruggiero never changes it throughout the poem.

"I am merry," sings Emanuele, "and joyous; I am a pious and a perfect man; I am cruel, and bloodthirsty; I am rich, and shameless; exquisite and delicious; a thief, and an assassin, gentle and greedy; I am a rogue and an oppressor, a deceiver and a liar; I am old and burdened with years, rich and poor; I am a disciple and a teacher; I am appreciated and despised."

I could continue to quote similar passages, but I consider that these are sufficient to show that an analogy exists between the two poets. Is this analogy merely accidental or did Emanuele really imitate the verses of Ruggiero Pugliese?

The resemblance pointed out just now might certainly induce us to believe that the second hypothesis is correct, but, on the other hand, arguments of far greater importance weigh against this conclusion.

The two poets have in common the strangeness, the dulnesses, I should say, of their conceptions; neither of them describes ordinary events, or gives vent to his natural feelings; their poetry is entirely composed of empty words and of artifices. This is their chief point of resemblance; but even this can be easily explained. It has often occurred to men to be moved by the same stimulus to accomplish great works of similar nature, or that both have fallen into the same error in endeavouring to render their works attractive. But this phenomenon is not invariably due to chance only; external conditions have always a certain influence.

Now, to return to our two poets, we find that Ruggiero Pugliese follows the fashion of his times and gives us in his poems the artificiality and mannerism common to writers of his day. Emanuele was also educated in the Provençal school, and was especially influenced by its

Hebrew representatives, into whose writings mannerism and artificiality had in the lapse of time crept; he therefore reproduces in his poetry the grotesqueness of Ruggiero's poem, if indeed it does not entirely pervade it.

It is not possible to deny that Emanuele may have been acquainted with Ruggiero's poems, but the analogy can be explained without this admission. The one is the slave of a school which dominated the world of culture; the other, although living later and belonging to another class of poets, feels its influence nevertheless. This fact certainly accounts for the similarity of style, common love for the unusual and the artificial, for contrasts and play of words.

Otherwise Ruggiero Pugliese offers us in his insipid stanzas a song to his lady. Being a faithful imitator of the Provençal school, like his contemporaries of Frederick II.'s Court, he sings of vague love, aimless, and barren; but he is always a lover. Now this is certainly not the case with Emanuele, who makes no mention of love in his poem, in which he treats of every other subject.

It is the method common to both poets, of claiming a great number of moral virtues and defects, that has led us to suppose that Emanuele imitated Ruggiero. But the Sicilian poet's extravagance is only the result of his intense affection for his lady, while Emanuele's constant self-glorification is merely a poetical deceit. He does not intend to exalt his own virtues when he puts his hand to the lyre. The Prince, his patron, was full of enthusiasm for some lines on the months of the year,<sup>1</sup> and remembered having seen a Christian poem, which described "all the arts, the countries, the kingdoms, the languages, and the sciences." He wished to see such a poem produced by a Jew, and he therefore appealed to Emanuele, who readily complied with his wish.<sup>2</sup> Therefore there can be no

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<sup>1</sup> Comp. the first part of the *Ninth Mecama*, which I have already quoted (p. 70).

<sup>2</sup> Comp. the short introduction to his poem (p. 74).



further doubt that Emanuele did not copy the poetry of Ruggiero Pugliese, however, naturally the hypothesis may have arisen.

Let us therefore leave off studying the style, which so resembles that of the Sicilian poet, and let us take, as a starting-point for our investigations, the theme of the poem which he imitated. As a result, we shall have to examine one of those encyclopædic compilations, which, under the title of *Breviaire d'Amour*, or *Tesoro*, or *Image du Monde*, were popular in the Middle Ages amongst scholars.

We have quoted above some works of this kind composed by Jews, and we are not surprised to learn that Emanuele also should have imitated them. His extravagant fancy found in such an imitation ample scope to expand freely, and to use grotesque rhymes and ill-connected words.

But what work, then, served Emanuele for a model? It is well-known that many encyclopædias circulated freely among the cultured classes during the Middle Ages. Emanuele, however, facilitated the task of reviewers by remarking that the work which he imitated was written in verse, and for my own part I firmly believe that I am right in asserting that the central idea of the Hebrew poem is to be found in the *Trésor* of *Peire de Corbiac*.

This poet was born in Corbiac, of a poor family, and flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century. He is celebrated chiefly for his *Trésor*,<sup>1</sup> a poetical composition of 840 Alexandrines. This would be the work which, according to some critics, inspired Brunetto Latini to write his *Tesoretto*. Corbiac's poem is of a didactic and encyclopædic nature, and affords the author an opportunity of displaying his own scientific knowledge, or, better still, of defining the range of learning attained at that period.

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<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Le Trésor de Peire de Corbiac*, published by Dr. Sachs, Brandenburg, 1859.

Pietro de Corbiac commences his poem by invoking the name of Jesus Christ, and praying for heaven's help in his work, and having said a few words concerning his own condition, he enters at once upon his theme.

He tells, first of all, of the mysteries of creation, and of the most salient facts of the Old and of the New Testaments. This narrative, being somewhat prolix, occupies 547 lines—two-thirds, that is, of the whole poem.

Having devoted so much space to the historical portion of his work, the poet declares that he does not consider that which is to follow of less importance; thereupon he sings of the seven liberal arts.

He knows them all perfectly and can give a valuable exposition of each in succession. But this does not suffice; he also knows medicine and surgery, necromancy and mythology, the greatest exploits of the Greeks and Romans, of the French and English.

Such is the principal theme of the simple, unelaborate poem of Peire de Corbiac. The similarity of subject and style, which I have pointed out, is sufficient to convince the reader that Peire's poem may well have served as a model to Emanuele.

The multiplicity of subjects which he treats, the number of problems which he expounds, and the numerous historical facts concerning the different peoples and the various countries which he states, may have been included in the arts and sciences, the languages and countries, which Emanuele admired in the poem, which he may have imitated. But since similar details appear also in other poems of the same kind, let us examine more minutely the basis on which our belief in the intimate connection between the two poets rests.

In the first place there is nothing to disprove the possibility, that Emanuele may have imitated Corbiac's poem. Since it was written about the year 1225, in France, the work could certainly have been known in Italy eighty years afterwards; this is all the more probable, when we

remember the zeal with which such works were studied at that time.

The fact that Emanuele must have been acquainted with a foreign language, if he really imitated Pietro di Corbiac, need not cast a doubt upon the truth of my assertion; for here it can hardly be the question of a foreign language. Indeed, although the *Divina Comedia* was written in Italian, all the Romance languages were so widely known, that any one occupied, like Emanuele, in writing poetry, must have known Provençal, the language, in fact, used by the earlier poets. Likewise he whose critical faculty is biased by strenuous orthodoxy may consider it strange that Emanuele, being so religious, should have been induced to imitate a work, which commences with an invocation to Jesus and Mary, and with an assertion of his allegiance to the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> But such reasoning could only result from ignorance of Emanuele's religious spirit, which was entirely free from intolerance and fanaticism. If then we cannot question the possibility that Emanuele may have imitated Pietro di Corbiac, let us see what are the points of resemblance between the two poets.

Pietro di Corbiac prepares to sing because he wishes to explain his condition to the wise; he wishes to tell them, that although poor in worldly goods he is richer than they, who have money and castles, because he possesses a Treasure richer than silver and gold.

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<sup>1</sup> Thus the *Tesoro* of Pietro di Corbiac begins:—

Verse 1. "El nom de Jesu Crist qu'es nostre salvamens.

Verse 2. "De Santa Maria, don el pris naissemens . . . .

Verse 38. "Jeu ai ferma cresenza e sai sertanamens,

Verse 39. "Qu'el sanz pair' e'l sanz filz e'l sanz espiramens

Verse 40. "Aquestas tres personas son us Dieus solamens."

Line 1. To "The name of Jesus Christ our Saviour,

Line 2. "of holy Mary, who gave birth to him . . . .

Line 38. "I believe with a perfect faith and know for certain

Line 39. "That the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Ghost,

Line 40 "the three perrons, are only one God."

Verse 6. "Farai saber als savis c'om sui de sen manens.

Verse 11. "Non cuges per tot so qu'en ane malemens

"tals pot aver mils marcs, no l vai tan ricamens . . .

Verse 20. "Jeu son pros e gaillarz e viv rics e manens.

"Qu'eu m'ai un ric tesauro amassat maltraens

"qu'es plus pretios, pus cars e pus valens

"que peiras pretiozas ni fis aurs ni argens." . . .<sup>1</sup>

We find similar lines in Emanuele's poem. He wishes to make his character known to the latest posterity, and to the most distant peoples, because "he has a larger portion than his brothers,"<sup>2</sup> because his glory rests in leaving behind him a great name.

Continuing to speak of his *Tesoro*, Peire de Corbiac exclaims that nobody will have the power to rob him of it; in truth, during his life-time he will not lose it, nor will death lessen its worth, but its glory will always increase.

Verse 26. "Ni non lo perdray vivs, neis can seray morens—ni ja non mermara, anz er tos temps creissens."<sup>3</sup>

Well, these verses can but remind us of those of Emanuele in which he laments the necessity of forgetting everything on the day of his death.

Pietro di Corbiac rejoices in the thought that his *Tesoro* will endure to the last moment of his life, and that it will even increase in worth. But such a thought made quite a different impression on Emanuele, who exclaims:—

"I regretted the arrival of my death

"since I would die like any fool.

"And what profit shall I have from my wisdom

"which I shall forget on the day of my death

"during my long sleep within the tomb ;"

and these words, which everybody could think inspired by

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<sup>1</sup> Verse 6. "I will make known to the wise how rich I am. . .

Verse 11. "Do not think that I am not well off ;

"he who possesses a thousand marks may not be as rich as I...

Verse 20. "I am valiant and strong, rich and wealthy . . .

"Because I have amassed a rich treasure with difficulty,

"which is more precious, more valuable, more prized

"than precious stones set in gold and silver.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is taken from Genesis xlviii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 26. "I shall not lose it living, nor even when I die,

Nor will it ever diminish, but it will increase with time.

a profound ascetism, remind me of the most bold verses of the vagrant "Goliardi."

But how much more resemblance there is between Emanuele and Peire de Corbiac in their exposition of the principal theme of their poem than in the passages above quoted.

Peire de Corbiac, wishing to relate to us the story of the Old and of the New Testament, and the history of the Greeks and of the Romans, or wishing to expound some principles of astronomy, or some rules of prosody, contrives to tell us all that he knows. This plan is exactly followed by Emanuele, so that it is no longer possible to deny the derivation of one poem from the other.

Here are some lines of the Provençal poet :—

549. "En totas las vii. ars soi assatz conoissens  
       "Per Gramatica sai parlar latinamens  
       "declinar e costruire e far derivamens . . .
554. "Per Dialectica sai arrazonablemens  
       "a pauzar e respondre e falsar argumens . . .
558. "Per Retorica sai per bels affaitamens  
       "colorar mas paraulas e dir adautamens . . ."
564. "De Ley ni de Decretz n'ai apres anc granmens . . .
568. "De Muzica sai jeu tot aondo zamens. . . .
583. "D'Arismetica sai totz los acordamens  
       "E sai de las figuras cal comte son rendens. . . .
590. "De Geometria sai tan dels mezuramens . . .  
       "e sai proar triangle e quadrangl' eissamens<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> 549. "I am very well versed in the seven arts.  
       "As regards grammar, I can speak correctly,  
       "Decline, construe and make derivations.
554. "In Dialectics I can reason logically.  
       "I can answer and defeat arguments.
558. "In Rhetoric I know how by beautiful embellishments,  
       "To colour my words, and to speak agreeably . . ."
564. "In jurisprudence I have also learned very much."
568. "Of music I know so much . . .
583. "Of Arithmetic I know all the rules  
       "And how to solve mathematical problems . . .
590. "Of Geometry I know all the measurements  
       "And I know how to prove a triangle and a quadrangle equal.

598. "D'Astronomia sui tant bos clers eissamens  
qu'eu sai ben con tarneia lo sels e'l firmamens. . .

726. "De Fisica sai ieu aissi sometamens. . . .

732. "De Sirurgia no sai ni vuelh sos feramens. . . .

734. "De Nigromancia apris totz los encantamens. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Then he knows the history of the Greeks, and of Troy, of Thebes, Rome, France, England, etc.

750. "Faulas d'auctors sai ieu a miliers et a cens.

824. "Jeu sai chansos, e notas e vers bons e valens  
pastorelas apres amorosas plazens. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

All these liberal arts and sciences, of which the Provençal poet speaks, form only a part of his intellectual endowments. Emanuele wishes to appear equally omniscient. Thus, when he is only speaking on subjects treated by the Christian poet, he yet poses as a scholar in all the various branches of learning.

He calls himself a "a magician and a seer, a versifier and a poet," "I am a diviner and a naturalist," he sings, "a theologian. I am a prince and a father of song. I am expert in matter and in the accidents of matter—in radiating lines, both in the circle and in the hemisphere. I understand the sciences, I know the planets, the stars and other celestial bodies. I am learned in geometry. I have a knowledge of nature, of the circle and of the quadrilateral figure, of prophecy and of dreams. I am a logician, well versed in syllogisms and inferences, in demonstrations and in accidents. I am an expert sophist, I understand rain, earthquakes, and clouds. I understand poetry. I am acquainted with the mysteries of the Bible, with the Mishnah and the Gemarrah, with the principles of Sifri and Sifrà."

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<sup>1</sup> 598. "In Astronomy I am likewise such a good scholar

"That I know as well as the eagle the skies and the heavens...

726. "Of medicine I know all the branches.

732. "Of Surgery I do not know, nor do I wish to know, its cruelties.

734. "Of Necromancy I have learned all its magic.

<sup>2</sup> 750 "The fables of authors I know in their thousands and hundreds.

824. "I know songs, harmony, and good verses,  
Pastorals, and pleasing love-songs. . . "

It is evident, that Emanuele very much resembles Peire de Corbiac, not only in claiming a knowledge of all the sciences, but also in his manner of treating them.

In fact, not to compare the literary art, which they each manifested in a different degree, we find that the chief difference lies in the fact that Emanuele treats of Jewish as well as of secular subjects. Moreover, Peire de Corbiac enlarges very often upon the minutiae of each science, and especially of Music and Astronomy; Emanuele, on the contrary, only enumerates them; if he ever enters into details, he does so without order, promiscuously, as it enters in his head. Another point which helps to prove that Emanuele imitated the Provençal poet, is found in their similar way of treating man's moral qualities.

When Peire de Corbiac discusses astronomy, he dwells at length on the influence exercised by the planets on the fortune and character of man. Saturn for example :

(619) "qu' es sobrans mals e frey descrezens . . . .  
 . . . . nos fa perezos, nuaillos e poignens,  
 fremiros e escars, e malvaz e tenens." <sup>1</sup>

Wise and cunning Jupiter makes us

(627) ". . . . enveios, despensans e metens  
 cobedezos d'onor e seignoreiamens." <sup>2</sup>

Mars, the bold and proud planet, makes us irascible.

Venus is

(649) ". . . . amorosa, alegre e jauzens  
 genta, clara e blanca, humils e patz fazens." <sup>3</sup>

Mercury, the swift messenger,

(662) "es bons ab los benignes e mals ab los nosens  
 cest nos fas viassiers e leugieus e burdens . . ." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (619) "Who controls evil and unbelievers,  
 . . . makes us lazy, torpid and lethargic,  
 Timid and avaricious, cowardly and grasping."

<sup>2</sup> (627) ". . . . envious, profligate and generous  
 Covetous of honour and majesty."

<sup>3</sup> (649) ". . . gentle, bright and joyous,  
 pleasant, gay and pure, modest and peace-loving."

<sup>4</sup> (662) ". . . is good to the virtuous and cruel to the wicked  
 and makes us nimble, frivolous, and playful."

Emanuele, who does not enlarge on the sciences which he mentions, does not touch upon the theory of the influence of planets; but, exaggerating Peire's manner of claiming to possess the knowledge of all the sciences described in his poem, he declares that he also is endowed with all good and bad moral qualities.

Peire de Corbiac is only guilty of this weakness once, towards the end of the poem, when he writes:—

<sup>1</sup> (828) Ni tenc los fols e ls savis, a cascu soi plazens ;  
E m sai guarar d'enuitz e de deschauzimens . . . .  
Ab totz me sai aidar, cavayer e sirvens.  
Ab fols passi com puesc, ab savis saviemens. . . . .

The Jewish poet makes a habit of this self-glorification all through his poem, and particularly in those strange lines which I quoted when comparing him to Ruggiero Pugliese, or in the following, which are very similar:—

“For the foolish, I am foolish; for the perverse, I am perverse; for the impious, I am impious. . . . I am cunning and intelligent; I am formidable and terrible;<sup>2</sup> I have glory and majesty; I am calm on the day of misfortune. . . . I wage war, and I make peace; I am both thief and truthful; I am compassionate to the merciful and cruel to the wicked.”

Several of these expressions are, no doubt, taken from the Bible; but the main idea, that pretension, I mean, to so many different moral qualities, is due to the influence of the Provençal poet.

The idea, for example, on which Emanuele insists, of being foolish with the foolish or good with the good,

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<sup>1</sup> (828.) “I associate with the foolish and the wise, and am pleasing to each one;

I know how to keep myself from rivalry and from rudeness . . . .;

I know how to help myself with all, rich and poor.

With the foolish I pass as possible; with the wise as wise.”

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Habakkuk i. 7.



although it is certainly found in the Bible,<sup>1</sup> is also the text supplied by Peire de Corbiac.

Emanuele does not appear to imitate when he gives a catalogue of the countries which he has visited, of the languages which he has learned, and of the crafts which he has practised. The list of countries could have a counterpart in the historical portion of Corbiac's poem, where he mentions confusedly the names of many countries, peoples, and kings. This analogy is perhaps too forced to be admitted. Further, as to the languages and crafts, we do not find any traces of their enumeration in the work of Peire de Corbiac.

These facts, however, do not detract from the truth of my assertion.

Because Emanuele has imitated, as I firmly believe, the work of Peire de Corbiac, he need not have made a servile copy of each part.

I have already had occasion to note, that although occasionally Emanuele degenerates from an imitator into a genuine plagiarist, sometimes he achieves original work.

Thus in the work we are now studying, we find that Emanuele, attracted by Corbiac's *Tresor*, wished to imitate it. Being, however, also influenced by other *Tresors*, and carried away by his unbridled imagination, he merely took the central idea from Peire de Corbiac, and enlarging upon it, gave to his work the impress of his own individuality.

It, therefore, cannot be doubted that the work is partly an imitation; unfortunately, however, that portion which is entirely original, does not increase the value and beauty of the whole poem.

Peire de Corbiac, in his *Tresor*, follows the prevailing custom of collecting in a book of small dimensions, all the fragments of human knowledge, which the barbarous

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Psalms xviii. 26 and 2 Samuel xxii. 26 : "With the merciful thou shalt show thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou shalt show thyself upright ; With the pure thou shalt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou shalt show thyself froward."

Middle Ages had not destroyed, and concentrates in his 800 lines, all the ideas which were then current concerning God, nature and man.

Ignoring the fact that Peire claims the knowledge of all the subjects which he treats, and also the poverty of his poetry, we must admit that all is narrated with a certain method, and that his task of acquainting us with the condition of Science in his age is fully accomplished.

Can as much be said of Emanuele? Certainly not. For in the first place we seek in vain a purpose in his poem, which, as in Corbiac's work, may justify the chaos of subjects so diverse, and whether we examine Emanuele's poem from the Jewish or from the Christian point of view, or from both at the same time, the same lack of purpose is noticeable.

Certainly Emanuele's exaggerated and chaotic catalogue of sciences and doctrines is no index to the learning of his age, neither does it appear to be a didactic poem, although it contains an enumeration of all the good and bad moral qualities; and still less does the foolish catalogue of arts and crafts give us any information. But to continue. I have quoted above some of Emanuele's lines, but they do not run in this sequence in the poem itself. I have been forced to gather them here and there, almost invariably in places where I least expected to light upon them, for all is confusion in the poem; it is merely an entangled mingling of adjectives, an intricate labyrinth of substantives. Thus while Emanuele is intent on displaying his scientific knowledge, he suddenly changes his theme to a list of moral qualities, which he as suddenly deserts to enumerate the crafts which he exercises; then a list follows of virtues and sciences, introduced promiscuously and interspersed with alien subjects, according as caprice dictates, or as the rhyme requires.

Thus all the second part of the ninth mecama is merely a disorderly catalogue, reminding us of the worst passages of Emanuele's twenty-seventh mecama, which is intended

as an imitation of Dante, but is sometimes a long and superficial catalogue of persons met with in hell and in paradise, whose vices and virtues he speaks of in an annoying and exaggerated strain.

Very likely Emanuele wished to testify once again to his great knowledge of Hebrew, and it must be admitted that so far he was successful. But certainly Emanuele's ninth mecoma does not give us a very high idea of his poetic sense, or of his artistic talents; and to his laurel wreath will not be added one single leaf by this endless string of disjointed words and tedious rhymes, which follow one the other like a long procession of monks in the uniformity and monotony of their weary tramp.

GUSTAVO SACERDOTE.

Berlin, December, 1894.

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